

NCA
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ASIAN STUDIES MEETING

ANNCR:

MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND SCHOLARS ARE GATHERING IN THE CANADIAN CITY OF TORONTO TO LOOK AT ASIA'S PAST AND ITS PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN IS IN TORONTO AND HAS THIS REPORT.

VOICE:

THE OCCASION FOR THE GATHERING HERE IN CANADA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY IS THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN STUDIES. THE SETTING FOR THIS YEAR'S ASIAN CONFERENCE IS UNUSUAL. FOR IT'S THE FIRST OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST SOCIETY DEALING EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE CULTURE AND CIVILIZATIONS OF ASIA. AND THOUGH THE GREAT MAJORITY OF ITS MEMBERS REPRESENT FACULTIES OF AMERICAN AND CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES, SCHOLARS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE SHARED AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE ORGANIZATION OVER THE YEARS. THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM IS HEADED BY SCHOLARS FROM SUCH COUNTRIES AS AUSTRALIA, SINGAPORE, INDIA, BURMA AND JAPAN,

IN ALL, TWO HUNDRED SIXTY PAPERS WILL BE READ AT SIXTY-FOUR SEMINARS RANGING IN SUBJECT AND POINT OF HISTORY FROM CHINA'S NEO-CONFUCIAN PERIOD TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MODERN-DAY ASIA. SESSIONS ON CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AFFAIRS INCLUDE A LOOK AT POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA, A DISCUSSION OF INTRA-ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND A COLLECTION OF PAPERS ON ASIA'S NUCLEAR FUTURE. AS A SPECIAL FEATURE THIS YEAR TO

COMMEMORATE THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL, A GROUP OF JURISTS FROM INDIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES WILL DISCUSS THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION ON ASIAN PERSPECTIVES.

THE SHEER SIZE OF THE MEETING -- REPRESENTING AS IT DOES THE RESEARCH OF SCHOLARS FROM MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED UNIVERSITY FACULTIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD -- REFLECTS THE SPECATACULAR GROWTH OF ASIAN STUDIES SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO. AND, NOWHERE IS THIS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE UNITED STATES. IN NINETEEN FORTY-EIGHT -- THE YEAR THAT THE ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES WAS FORMED -- THERE WERE LITERALLY ONLY A HANDFUL OF AMERICANS WHO WERE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED AND ACTIVE IN THE ASIAN FIELD. AND ONLY FOURTEEN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OFFERED FORMAL TRAINING IN ASIAN STUDIES. TODAY, ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, THERE ARE NEARLY FIVE THOUSAND AMERICANS WHO QUALIFY IN SOME WAY AS ASIAN SPECIALISTS. TWENTY-SEVEN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES GRANT ADVANCED DEGREES IN ASIAN STUDIES, AND THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY'S INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING OFFER COURSES IN ASIAN AFFAIRS.

IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE FOREIGN STUDIES, AMERICAN AND FOREIGN ACADEMICIANS HAVE BEEN DEDICATED TO THE CONCEPT THAT LANGUAGE AND AREA COMPETENCY ARE INDISPENSABLE TO THE STUDY OF ANY SOCIETY. AND THIS PRINCIPLE IS BEING DEMONSTRATED TO THE FULLEST BY THE ASIAN SCHOLARS GATHERED HERE IN TORONTO.

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